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History of the Utz and  
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# HISTORY OF THE UTZ AND TANNER FAMILIES

Compiled by:

Major Lee N. Utz,  
U.S. Marine Corps,  
(1941).

Allen County Public Library  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

HISTORY

OF THE

UTS AND TANNER

FAMILIES

Compiled by

Major L. H. Allen  
U.S. Army Corps  
(1911)

In the year 1717 a little band of German Lutheran emigrants left the shores of the Fatherland and set sail with the hope of finding a better country in the wilds of Pennsylvania. The vessel that was to bring them to America stopped at London, and there her captain was imprisoned for several weeks on account of debt. By this delay a part of the ship's provisions was consumed while in port, so that many of the passengers died of hunger while crossing the Atlantic. The remainder never reached their intended destination in Pennsylvania, for a storm arose and they were driven far to the southward. The twenty families, comprising about eighty persons, who remained after the trying and disastrous voyage finally sailed up the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac river and landed probably at Fredericksburg -- Strangers in a strange land -- where they were sold by the captain of the ship to pay their cost of transportation. Governor Alexander Spottswood advanced the money, and they became his indentured servants. He settled them on the south side of the Rapidan River, near what became known as "Germanna Ford", later to become of further historical importance in the Civil War campaigns around Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. This location is about 15 miles west of Fredericksburg, now on Virginia State Highway No. 3, at present in Orange County. Three years prior to this, Spottswood had established at this same spot a German Reform Colony, consisting of twelve families from Nassau-Siegen.

Of the 1717 colony of German Lutherans, eight of the colonists names are definitely known; they were Christopher Zimmerman, Mathew (Michael) Smith, Michael Cook, Andrew Kerker, Henry Snider, Christopher Parlur (later known as Barlow), Hans Berren Burger (Harnsbarger), and John Motz.

The other twelve of this colony are, in all probability, George Utz, Conrad Amburger, Balthaser Blankenbaker, Michael Clore, George Sheible, George Mayer, Michael Kaifer, Michael Holt, Zacharias Fleshman and Andrew Bullenger. The last twelve named together with Nicholas Yager, John Broyles, Philip Paulitz, Henry Snider, Michael Smith and Michael Cook were sued in the courts of Spotsylvania County in 1724 for their passage



money, which Colonel Spottswood claimed was still due him for their transportation. Three of them made oath that they came to this country in 1717. It might be logically concluded that all of the eighteen involved in the litigation came the same year.

The particular locality from which they came in Germany is not definitely known; but from the naturalization papers of Nicholas Yager and his son Adam, we are informed that Adam was born near Dusseldorfin, in the Dukedom of Newburg, Germany, and that Nicholas was a native of Hesse. In the Moravian diaries it is said that most of the colonists living in the neighborhood of Hebron Church in 1748 came from Wurtemberg; this may or may not apply to the 1717 colonists. A report printed at Weimar states that they came from Alsace, the Palatinate, and neighboring districts. These statements are indefinite, at best, but it is improbable that future research will be able to throw further light on the subject. The chief cause of the immigration of this colony to America was persecution. In a few words, the condition of Germany at this time was as follows: The wars of Louis XIV and that of the Spanish succession had almost exhausted Germany, and especially those people along the border. In addition to the wars, the extravagance of the rulers and the contention that existed between the religious sects caused the colonists to sail to the New World; among those who emigrated we find the colony of 1717.

Governor Spottswood employed these Germans in his iron mines near Germanna, and also at odd times they did a little farming; this proved of great assistance to them in the future. Their lot was a sad and bitter one at Germanna, and at last they decided to seek land of their own. They pushed out into the wilderness and found the land which they desired on the banks of the Robinson River and White Oak Run in Madison (then Spotsylvania) County. This decision on their part was undoubtedly the reason for the court action of Colonel Spottswood, since he wished to retain them in his service. On April 23, 1724, George Utz and Zerchias Fleshman laid a petition before the Colonial Council at Williamsburg in behalf of themselves and fourteen other high-Germans then living near Germanna, in which they complain that Colonel Spottswood had unjustly sued them in the court of Spotsylvania



County for the non-performance of a certain agreement pretended to have been entered into with him in consideration of money advanced them for transportation to this country. Most of these suits against the Germans were apparently dismissed by the court.

In moving from Germanna to their future home, they moved up the Rapidan River, crossing this stream, according to tradition, at the old German ford just below Madison Mills. They pushed towards the mountains in the distance until they passed the spot where Madison Court-house now stands; here they came to a halt and settled on both sides of the Robinson River and White Oak Run within a circle with a radius of about eight miles. The place of their settlement is described in the old records as being at "Smith's Island", for White Oak Run was first called "Island Run", because of an island which was then situated near it's mouth. All of the deed of this period are described by their position on Island Run.

All of the colonists did not move at the same time. Tradition has preserved thirteen surnames which are said to be in the first party to move. They are: Utz, Aylor, Crigler, Blankenbaker, Carpenter, Zimmermen, Finks, Hoffman, Clore, Yager, Wayland, Souther, Crisler and Weaver. By 1728 the settlement numbered about three hundred.

The time of the removal of the first settlers cannot be fixed definitely; however, it certainly was not earlier than 23 April, 1724, for it is known that they were all living near Germanna on that date. It could not have been later than 24 June 1726, for the first lands were patented on that date. From certain court orders, granting some of the Germans the privilege of making roads from Germanna to Smith's Island, we may conclude that the settlement began about 1725.

The names of the Germans who first patented land on the Robinson River and White Oak Run are: George Utz, Michael and John Tanner (the first time that the name Tanner appears in the records), Zacharias Fleshman,



Henry Snider, Mattheas, Nicholas and Belthaser Blankenbaker, George Sheible, Nicholas Yager, Christopher Zimmerman, Michael Smith, Jacob Crigler, Michael Clore, Michael Cook, George Mayer, George Woodroof, Matthias Barlow, Michael Kaifer, William Carpenter, and Michael Holt. Two days later John Motz and John Harnsbarger bought land. These patents were dated 24 June, 1726. Then on September 28, 1728, Robert Tanner, John Rouse, Michael Crisler, and others patented land. Andrew Garr also patented land on 3 October 1734.

This colony, transplanted to more congenial soil on the western frontier, became for a time the advance guard of westward civilization. There was no white settlement between them and the Pacific Ocean. The vast wilderness surrounded them; settlements of Indians are said to have existed at a distance of about forty miles. The Indians sometimes camped nearby, visiting the settlers, and sometimes even allowed themselves to be coaxed into their homes. The tradition is still preserved that from the old church the smoke of their campfires could be seen, and that guards were placed around the church to protect the worshipers against an unexpected attack.

The first work of the settlers was to build a fort and stockade on the north side of the Robinson River, on what was, in 1938, known as the "Thornton Utz farm", on land which had been patented by George Utz. This fort was used as protection against Indians, and also as a church. A school, purported to be the first school for white children in the state of Virginia was started.

About the year 1726 the "German Chapel" was built. The old records show that, in the year 1760, Lord Fairfax made a grant of land to John Carpenter, in which one line of the survey is described as meeting George Utz's line at the "place where the German Chapel stood". Research proves that the "Old German Chapel" occupied the same site as that still occupied by the Hebron Lutheran Church.

The work of building the Hebron Lutheran Church was completed about the year 1740; and a letter of thanks,



dated 29 August 1740, and signed by George Utz and five other members, was addressed to all who had assisted financially in its construction. On 21 July 1739, a farm of 685 acres was bought from Thomas Farmer for five shillings sterling and deeded to George Utz and Michael Clore, trustees for the German congregation.

Thenceforth, the colony prospered and continued to grow, as the original families increased and other settlers arrived. The names of Utz and Tanner continue to be prominent in local and church affairs down through the years. In the Revolutionary War Ephraim Utz, Abraham Tanner and Jacob Tanner are known to have served, but no details are known of their military careers. No records exist showing what the Madison County inhabitants did during the war of 1812 or the Mexican war, but it is known that a considerable number of men from the locality were in the service. The Civil War records are replete with the names of both Utz and Tanner, from Madison County, all, of course, in the Confederate army.

The earliest ancestors to whom we can trace direct lineage are MATHIAS HOUSE, EPHRAIM TANNER (1778-1846) -- his son-in-law, and ABSALOM UTZ. There is no reason, however, to doubt that Absalom Utz was a direct descendant of the George Utz who came to Virginia in 1717, or that Ephraim Tanner was a direct descendant of either Michael, John or Robert Tanner, who are recorded as having patented land in Madison County in the 1720's. JEMIMA BLANKENBAKER, who married ABSALOM UTZ, was a direct descendant of ADAM GARR, who was born in Holland in the 17th century. She is listed in the "GARR GENEALOGY", published copies of which were still extant in Madison County in 1937. MATHIAS HOUSE was the father of SUSANNA, who married EPHRAIM TANNER. In 1937 I personally examined the original marriage "bond", or contract, of Ephraim Tanner and Susanna House, dated 30 January 1801. It was signed by Ephraim Tanner, the bride-groom, and by the bride's father, Mathias House. It is preserved in the office of the County Clerk of Madison County, at Madison Court House, Virginia.

A constitution of the Hebron Lutheran Church, written in the German language and bearing the date 1776,



is also on file at the above place, and, among others, is signed by the following: George Utz, Sr., George Utz, Jr., and Ephraim Utz; and by Jacob, Simeon, Moses, Aaron and William Tanner.

Our family names underwent a change shortly after their arrival in America. UTZ is the Anglicization of the German "OUDS" and the original spelling of TANNER was "TUNNER"

About the year 1800 Ludwig Rouse ventured as far westward as what is now Boone County, Kentucky. He returned to Madison where he praised the west, declared his intention to make his home there, and departed for Kentucky again. William Carpenter made a horseback journey to Boone County in 1804. In that same year Ludwig Rouse returned to Madison, Virginia, again, for his betrothed wife, where his success in Kentucky caused considerable excitement, and finally, on 8 October, 1805, fourteen men, with their families, started for Boone County, Kentucky, in Calistoga wagons. They were: EPHRAIM TANNER and his wife SUSANNA; Solomon Hoffman and his wife Elizabeth; George Rouse and his wife; Johannes Hans and his wife; Ferdinand Zimmerman and his wife Rosa; Johannes Rouse and his wife Nancy; Benjamin Aylor; Simeon Tanner; Josiah Zimmerman; and Jeremiah Carpenter. After a journey of forty-nine days they arrived at their destination, on 25 November 1805. Three days later, on 28 November, 1805, a son, SIMEON H. TANNER, was born to SUSANNA and EPHRAIM TANNER.

EPHRAIM TANNER settled on land which, at present, (1941) is called the "Perry Utz place", and is on Highway 42, about a mile and a half south of Florence, where he built a log cabin. This original cabin is still standing, in a field about two hundred yards east of the road. Sheds have been built on two sides of it, adapting it to use as a barn, but the central portion is the original log structure. Both EPHRAIM and SUSANNA TANNER were buried in the family cemetery at this place, a hundred yards or so in rear of the house, where the stones still stand.

EPHRAIM and SUSANNA TANNER were the parents of thirteen children. They were as follows: a daughter



married Eli Carpenter; Mary, married Noah Surface (Whose children were Eli, John and Ben); Enos; Benjamin; Joshua; Moses; Aaron; Caleb; Joel; Ephraim Jr.; Frances; Rodie (married an Aylor); and SIMEON H.

SIMEON H. TANNER (28 November 1805 - 1 April 1891) was married twice. His first wife was REBECCA GATTEN (28 August 1809 - 11 May 1847), and their children were; Lavina, who married Jacob Floyd (the parents of Ben Floyd); SUSAN, who married ABSALOM JEFFERSON UTZ; Ellen, who married James (Uncle Jim) Smith; Julia Ann (or Julian), who married Bennett Craven; Rebecca, who married David Houston; Noah, who moved to Missouri; William; and Merriman. The second wife of Simeon H. Tanner was Rachel Black, and their children were Levi, Ezra, Moses, Amanda and Luther (Uncle Lute).

In 1806 the colonists who emigrated from Madison County, Virginia, erected a church which they called "Hopeful", the daughter of old Hebron Lutheran Church in Virginia. The first pastor of Hopeful Church was the Rev. William Carpenter, who had been pastor of the mother Church, and who came from Virginia in 1813. Both the UTZ and TANNER families continued to follow the Lutheran Church down to and to include A.J. and SUSAN UTZ, who are both buried in the Hopeful cemetery. EDWARD E. UTZ, although a member of the Baptist Church at Big Bone, was also buried at Hopeful, in the family lot.

It is not known when ABSALOM UTZ came to Kentucky. In Deed Book 7, page 60, at Madison, Virginia, there is recorded the fact that, on 14 April 1820, Absalom Utz and his wife, Jemima, deeded to John Weaver 139 acres of land for \$1112. This deed was "signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of David Utz". This land had been purchased on 22 January 1795, as evidenced by an entry on page 181 of Deed Book No. 1 at Madison. These facts may or may not mean that Absalom and his son David were still in Virginia at the time of the transaction, but it would seem logical to suppose that they would wish to dispose of all their property in Virginia prior to emigrating to Kentucky. This supposition would seem to place their arrival in Kentucky in the year 1820 -- but it is only a supposition. It is known that A.J. UTZ, David's



son, was born in Kentucky, in the year 1828.

The two known children of ABSALOM and JEMIMA UTZ are DAVID (31 May 1799 - 31 August 1881) and Abel. A Daughter of Abel was Jurita E., who married Franklin H. Smith; Willie Smith was their son, and Emerson Smith the son of Willie.

DAVID UTZ married ELIZABETH ADAMS (16 October 1808-10 May 1870), and their children were as follows: Cerila, who married Caleb Carpenter; John; Thomas, who married Elizabeth Rouse, and who were the parents of Harvey Utz; David Jr.; ABSALOM JEFFERSON; Frances, who married Jeremiah Beemon; Jemima, who married William (Uncle Bill) Tanner; Delila (Aunt Lile) who married Ephraim J. Utz; and Louisa, who married Martin Rouse.

ELIZABETH ADAMS was the daughter of Thomas and Alletta Adams the latter being a PEEK before marriage. They apparently lived most of their lives in Grant County, Kentucky, and are buried there, although it is believed that they lived for a time in Boone County. Their children, besides ELIZABETH, were: Mary, who married Micaiah Stephens, the parents of Erastus; Nellie, who married a WELDON; Alletta, who married a Metcalfe; Hampton; Dee; Robert; John; and Presley Peek, the latter being the father of Blufe, Dr. Samuel M., Mary Jane (Ossman) Elizabeth (Smith), and Hampton - the father of Rose. Erastus Stephens, mentioned above as the son of Micaiah Stephens and Mary Adams, was the father of Mary, who married Joseph Love; their daughter is May, who married Cum Bristow, and who are the parents of Mattie, who married E. Warren Utz.

Little is now known of David and Elizabeth Utz; they are known to have lived on what is now the Conner place, half-a-mile north of Union, for a time, and A.J. Utz may have been born there. Both David and Elizabeth are buried on the "Uncle Bill Tanner place", near the point where U.S. 42 crosses Gunpowder Creek between Florence and Union, Kentucky. The old family cemetery is on the south side of the creek, back of the old brick house, and their head-stones are still well preserved.

ABSALOM JEFFERSON UTZ (16 April 1828 - 23 January 1902) , commonly known as "Uncle Jeff Utz", married on



18 September 1849, SUSAN TANNER (24 July 1831 - 30 November 1919). He was a farmer and stock trader, and for a time, in the 1890's, ran a livery stable in Erlanger Kentucky. It is believed that all of their children were born at a place on upper Gunpowder Creek, between the Union-Florence road and the Mount Zion road. Shortly after the Civil war, about the year 1867, they moved to the farm about four miles west of Union on the "Rising Sun Grade", where they spent the rest of their lives with the exception of the time in Erlanger at the livery stable. Both Jeff and Susan Utz died at this farm. Their children were: Liberty Ann (21 February 1851-20 February 1875), who, on 1 September 1868 married John H. Aylor, and they were the parents of Ira Aylor; David Simeon (1 February 1853 - 15 August 1854); Mericus Alonzo known as "Lon" (7 April 1854 - 14 August 1932), who married Mary Ella Garrison on 18 February 1875, and they were the parents of Leslie Huey Utz; Tandy Lee (15 December 1856 - 12 August 1908), who married Carrie Johnson on 13 November 1879, and they were the parents of Claude Merlin and Jessie Lee Utz, and after the death of his first wife married Carrie Pearson, and they were the parents of Alan and Mary Utz; and EDWARD EVERETT.

EDWARD EVERETT UTZ (23 January 1861 - 17 March 1938) spent most of his youth on the farm west of Union on "Buffalo Ridge". He received a fairly good education for the period, attending school at White Haven and Union. On 25 May 1887 he was married at Glencoe, to ALLIE KENDALL CASTLEMAN (born 12 October 1864), and they lived at first with his parents, until the following March 1888, when they went to housekeeping in a log cabin in the forks of the road one half miles east of Big Bone Baptist Church, on what is now the Garrison place, where they lived a year. In March of 1889 they moved to the present home on "Buffalo Ridge", 3½ miles west of Union, which he had purchased from his brother, Lee Utz. There all their children were born, and there Ed Utz died on 17 March 1938, having lived on the home place for 49 years. He like his father, Jeff Utz, was a farmer and stock trader. He always raised a crop of tobacco, also, corn, and never failed to have considerable hay to harvest. During most of his life he made it a practice, also, to buy up lambs and cattle, which he would take to the







Howard Clegg

Virginia  
Ford Utz  
Born: 7 Jul '07  
Where Union, Ky.  
Married: 11 Dec '26.  
Died:

Edward Everett Utz  
Born: 23 Jan 1861  
Boone Co., Ky  
Married: 25 Mar 1887  
Died: 17 Mar 1938

Absalom Jefferson Utz  
Born: 16 April 1828  
Boone Co., Ky.  
Married: 18 Sept 1849  
Died: 23 Jan 1902

Susan Tanner  
Born: 24 July 1831  
Boone Co., Ky.  
Died: 30 Nov 1919

David Utz  
Born: 31 Mar 1799  
Died: 31 Aug 1881

Absalom Utz  
Born in Madison Co., Va.  
Jemima Blankenbaker  
Born in Madison Co., Va.

Elizabeth Adams  
Born: 16 Oct 1808  
Died: 10 May 1870

Thomas Adams  
Alletha Peek

Simeon H. Tanner  
Born: 28 Nov 1805  
Died: 1 April 1891

Ephraim Tanner  
15 Nov 1778 - 25 Oct 1846  
Susanna House  
20 Nov 1784 - 12 Oct 1878

Rebecca Gatten  
Born: 28 Aug 1809  
Died: 11 May 1847

Gatten  
Weatherby







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